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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION OF
AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 21 September 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council following its fifty-sixth session, held in Riyadh on 18 and 19 September 1995.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 28, 42, 44, 56 and 95, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jassim BUALLAY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Press communiqué issued in Riyadh on 19 September 1995 by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council following its fifty-sixth session

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its fifty-sixth regular session at the seat of its secretariat in Riyadh on 18 and 19 September 1995 under the chairmanship of its current Chairman, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bib Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yusuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

The Ministerial Council expresses its gratification at the good fortune of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman on his emerging unscathed from a recent traffic accident, and its members pray God to keep and preserve him and to grant him health and long life.

The Council expresses its grief at the death of His Excellency Mr. Qays Bin Abd al-Mun'im al-Zawawi, Deputy Prime Minister for Financial and Economic Affairs of Oman. It offers its sincere condolences to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, and it beseeches Almighty God to have mercy on the soul of the deceased and to inspire his family and relatives with patience and fortitude. "We are the Lord's, and unto Him we shall return."

The Council considered the progress made by Iraq in implementing the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait. It expressed great concern at the most alarming information on Iraq's nuclear, biological and bacteriological weapons programmes and on its missile programme that was disclosed following the recent developments in Iraq to the United Nations Special Commission entrusted with the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Iraq's admissions, after more than four years of denial, confirm the lack of seriousness and credibility with which the regime approaches its international obligations, a situation that poses a threat to security and stability in the region.

The Ministerial Council expresses its deep sadness that the Government of Iraq should have produced such highly dangerous and highly pathogenic bacteriological weapons that might have caused serious harm to Iraq itself and to the entire Arab region, with dire consequences that would have been difficult to predict. It calls upon the Special Commission to intensify its efforts and strengthen the expertise at its disposal in order to ensure that these weapons are brought under its control and eliminated as quickly as possible.

In this connection, the Council commends the Special Commission for having revealed important and dangerous aspects of the Iraqi weapons programmes and affirms its support for the Commission's efforts.

In the light of the recent developments in Iraq, which have demonstrated Iraq's lack of credibility and seriousness in addressing its international obligations and implementing the resolutions of the Security Council and have shown that Iraq has been pursuing a policy of duplicity over the past four years, the decision of the Security Council on 8 September 1995 to maintain the sanctions imposed on Iraq was dictated by the realities of the situation. The Ministerial Council urges the international community to maintain pressure on the Iraqi Government until such time as Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions and implements all the provisions of resolution 687 (1991) and of the other relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly those relating to the release of the Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and detainees whose suffering has been prolonged by the procrastination of the Iraqi Government and its failure to cooperate with the tripartite committee on prisoners and the International Committee of the Red Cross, in flagrant violation of the third and fourth Geneva Conventions and the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Ministerial Council stresses that Iraq must implement in full all of the provisions of the Security Council resolutions relating to the return of property, must adhere to the compensation mechanism and, in conformity with resolution 949 (1994), must refrain from any hostile or provocative action.

The Council affirms its wholehearted desire for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and rejects any policy aimed at its partition. It expresses its sympathy with the fraternal Iraqi people in its ordeal and in the suffering for which the Iraqi Government bears full responsibility because of its rejection of Security Council resolutions 706 (1991), 712 (1991) and 986 (1995), which addressed the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people and were intended to mitigate its suffering.

The Ministerial Council considered new developments in relations between the GCC member States and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the issue of its occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. It expressed its deep regret that Iran had not responded to repeated, earnest and sincere calls from the United Arab Emirates for the issue to be resolved by peaceful means. It expressed concern that the Iranian Government was continuing to take measures designed to perpetuate its occupation of the islands, in violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates and of international law, the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the principles of good-neighbourliness and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region.

The Council reiterates its firm position in support of the United Arab Emirates, and it affirms the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the islands in question. It further reaffirms its full and unconditional support for the peaceful means being pursued by the United Arab Emirates with a view to reasserting its sovereignty over the islands, and its calls upon Iran to agree to the referral of the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The Council reviewed the developments that had taken place in connection with the Middle East peace process and again expressed the hope that it would achieve its stated objective of establishing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region that would ensure a complete Israeli withdrawal from the City of Jerusalem and all the occupied Arab territories and the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State on its own national soil. The Council noted with concern that Israel was continuing to obstruct the exercise by the Palestinian Authority of its functions. The Council expresses the hope that the peace process will be carried through following the conclusion of the second stage of the Declaration of Principles agreement, that concerning the expanded scope of autonomy. The Council calls for the intervention of the co-sponsors of the peace process and of the international community in order to ensure that Israel abides by the spirit and letter of the bilateral agreements reached with the Palestinians, that it implements those agreements in accordance with the established timetable, that it removes the obstacles to the ongoing negotiations by, for example, withdrawing the occupation forces from the city of Hebron, that it desists from expropriating Palestinian land and all other practices incompatible with the peace moves in the region, and that it takes immediate and decisive measures to halt the attacks and terrorist acts being committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinian citizens in the occupied West Bank. The Council further calls upon the international community to exert pressure on Israel to comply with the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention.

The Ministerial Council renews its call to the Security Council to take all appropriate measures to compel Israel to refrain from altering the geographical and demographic character of the City of Jerusalem within its boundaries as of 4 June 1967 and to ensure that Israel complies with the United Nations resolutions relating to Jerusalem, especially Security Council resolution 252 (1968).

The Council also expresses the hope that the obstacles that Israel is raising to ongoing negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track will be overcome. Affirming its full support for Syria's legitimate demands and appreciating its position and the serious and sustained efforts it has made for the success of the peace process in the Middle East, the Council urges the co-sponsors of the peace process to redouble their efforts for progress in this domain. It looks forward to the achievement of overall progress on the Lebanese-Israeli track that will bring an end to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

The Council has also been following the latest developments in the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It welcomed the signing of the Agreed Basic Principles by the parties concerned and commended the strenuous efforts made in this regard by the United States and the States of the European Union, particularly France and the United Kingdom, and the decisive measures

taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Council expresses the hope that they will continue to require the Bosnian Serbs to comply with the relevant resolutions, to halt their attacks on safe areas and to withdraw their forces and heavy weapons from the exclusion zone around Sarajevo. The Council censures the Bosnian Serbs for their acts of aggression and for pursuing a policy of ethnic cleansing, and it affirms that peace must be based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina within its internationally recognized boundaries. It renews its call to the international community to provide assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to help it in its present plight, and it affirms in this connection the desire of the GCC States that the provision of material and moral support to Bosnia and Herzegovina should continue.

The Council commends the efforts made by the Contact Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) at its meeting held in Kuala Lumpur in September 1995 and expresses its satisfaction at the results achieved.

The Council welcomes the meeting held by the OIC Contact Group and the international Contact Group in Paris in September 1995, and it expresses its appreciation of the major and constructive role played by French President Jacques Chirac in this regard. It expresses the hope that consultation and cooperation between the two groups will continue as a factor promoting peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council expresses the hope that the warring factions in Somalia and Afghanistan will attend to the interests of their countries and peoples, that they will respond to the efforts being made to achieve national reconciliation and that they will halt the bloodshed and utilize all of their material and human resources for the restoration of peace, the reconstruction of their countries and the achievement of security, stability and affluence for their peoples.

On the economic front, the Council reviewed the proposals elaborated by the secretariat and submitted to the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation at its thirty-ninth meeting, held on 26 and 27 June 1995, for standardized customs tariffs vis-à-vis the rest of the world. It expressed the hope that the Committee would complete its discussions before the preparatory meeting for the Sixteenth GCC Summit.

The Council took note of the ninth annual report of the GCC Standards Organization in accordance with the Organization's statute.

The Council reviewed the topics that will be before the second Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit, to be held in Amman, Jordan, and affirmed the importance of coordination between its members in that regard.

The Council further reviewed the results of the meeting of the GCC and the European Union that took place in Granada, Spain, on 20 July 1995 and welcomed its positive outcome. It looks forward to the establishment of the joint group of experts to evaluate the conduct of the negotiations and to make proposals on action to promote their positive outcome.

The Council welcomed the European invitation to hold the joint ministerial meeting in Luxembourg on 22 and 23 April 1996.

The Ministerial Council looks forward to the preparatory meeting that will be held on 4 November 1995 in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.